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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

MAY 21, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 21, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. Cumhuriyet/Milli Gazete/Turkiye: It is claimed that around 90 PKK/KADEK militants have infiltrated into regions close to Turkish borders, and 300 more are in motion. After Barzani's IKDP, and Talabani's PUK, it is claimed PKK/KADEK wants to become the third major force in northern Iraq, and it is both continuing to threaten Turkey, and trying to increase its negotiation power with the US. Gathering at Kandil Mountain in northern Iraq, the organization's Presidency Council, which did not find the US demands acceptable, dispatched 90 militants toward the Turkish border, and moved 300 more to Gara and Gabbar.

3. Cumhuriyet: T.O., who was tortured by dripping melted plastic on her arms, and whose father was killed in front of her eyes by village guards in Omerli township of Mardin in 1994 when she was 12 years old, is still being threatened to withdraw her case charging 33 village guards with murder. T.O. and her father, Zeki Ozdemir, were stopped by village guards and jandarma for an ID check and taken to a farmhouse. The officials accused her father of taking food and ammunitions to the PKK, attacked her father with their rifle butts, and burnt plastic on her body. She said although her father was killed at the scene, no legal action was taken, and the village guards evicted them from the village a few days later. Ramazan Demiray left his village in Diyarbakir due to pressure to become a village guard in 1992. In the meantime, Demiray's land was used by village guards for eleven years. After filing a petition with the local Public Prosecutor's office in 2001 that his land had being expropriated without permission, charges were brought against the village guards. The court ordered the village guards to pay approximately USD 10 thousand to the land owner.

4. Radikal/Evrensel: The provincial chairmen of Peoples Democratic Party (DEHAP) announced in Ankara that, instead of the "repent law" on the agenda, a general amnesty, which would include PKK/KADEK militants as well, should be declared to establish reconciliation in the society. The DEHAP Provincial Chairmen said important developments that affected the region and Turkey were taking place as a result of US's intervention in Iraq, which created a historic chance for resolving the Kurdish issue. They said a non-discriminatory amnesty covering the PKK/KADEK components as well was essential in order to make the cessation of clashes lasting.

5. Sabah: Dr. Hasan Arslan, the Chief Doctor of State Hospital in Yukeskova of Hakkari, claimed he was kidnapped by three persons two days ago. Arslan said he had been beaten, his money and cellular phones seized, and he had been forced to sign promissory notes and resign from his position after he was interrogated. Arslan said the kidnappers had introduced themselves as members of "Yuksekova Gang." Three of the four persons Dr. Arslan reported were later arrested. Special Operations Team members, village guards, the mayor, and PKK confessors were tried at court

for membership in the "Yukeskova Gang" some time ago.

16. **Turkiye:** Security forces from the 3rd Border Battalion in Caldiran of Van arrested 81 Pakistani nationals near Soguksu village at the Iranian border. The arrestees, after being taken to the infirmary in Caldiran for a physical examination, were released by the court for extradition. Two Turkish national harboring the fugitives were detained.

17. **Milliyet/Hurriyet:** The President of Adana's Street Children Association, Prof. Dr. Fazilet Aksu, said because of eastern and southeastern families' desire to move to bigger towns to improve their economic lives the number of the street children increased. At a conference by Adana's Chamber of Pharmacists, Prof. Aksu said the situation of the street children aged between 12 and 14 had become an acute wound in the society. Aksu added that they conducted interviews with approximately 500 street children who mostly had migrated from Sanliurfa, Mardin, Diyarbakir, Siirt, and Kayseri provinces. The children said their families had moved to Adana, Istanbul, and Izmir in order to improve their economic conditions, but the migration had scattered the household members. In order to contribute to their families' income, the young children sell chewing gum, wipe windshields of the cars, and beg. Aksu said the majority of the children were illiterate, and were exposed to abuse and various diseases. Aksu mentioned that the association did not have the power to provide a humane life for those children, and the state did not fulfil its obligation in that regard. The Security Directorate of Adana estimated the number of street children at five thousand.

18. **Bolge:** Adana Provincial Jandarma Command announced that 34,029 roots of hemp, 300 hemp seeds, and 215 grams of heroin were seized in four separate operations in Adana, and four persons were detained in connection with the drugs.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

19. **Milliyet/Hurriyet:** The Young Businessmen Association opened a branch in Mersin, MEGIAD. MEGIAD's Executive Board President, Mehmet Karalar, said, within the framework of democratic order of Turkey and in the light of Ataturk's principles, they had founded the association in Mersin to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of the town. Karalar said they would fulfil their obligations as a business association and an NGO, and would try to find remedies to economic issues by arranging economic forums.

HOLTZ